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W represents a hydrolytically unstable linkage selected from

where m ranges from 1 to 10; and R₁ is -CH₂-, -CH₂CH₂- or -CH(CH₃)CH₂-.

27. A compound represented by the formula:

where

Z represents H or alkyl;

POLY and POLY' are poly(ethylene glycol) groups represented by the formula –(CH₂CH₂O)_n-CH₂CH₂O- in which n ranges from about 10 to about 4000;

Q represents a functional group; and

W represents a hydrolytically unstable linkage selected from

$$-O(CH_2)_{m}-CO_2R_1-CO_2-$$
, and

where m ranges from 1 to 10, and R₁ is -CH₂-, -CH₂CH₂- or -CH(CH₃)CH₂-.

